

Democracy in Virginia

A most interesting story appeared in the "News of Fifty Years Ago" on this page yesterday. It was a brief account of the completion of the work of the "Conservative State Convention," held in this city on December 12 and 13, 1887.

The work of this convention was the laying of the foundation upon which the new Great Seal of the United States, Virginia, which for a half a century now, with the exception of two years in the Reconstruction period, under the leadership of George Mason, has controlled political affairs, has successfully piloted the ship of State to the harbor of peace and for the good of the people.

Fifty years ago majority of the white people of Virginia, under the reconstruction laws passed by Congress, were disfranchised and their former loyalty to the cause of the Southern Confederacy. At the same time the negroes were given the right of suffrage, and they were under the guidance of white leaders, a large number of adventurers and "prospectors" from the North, who rushed to the South immediately after the War Between the States to make their backs, and were known as "scalawags," and to the white natives, who had claimed to be Union men in war times, and were given the name of "scalawags," promptly organized for political control of Virginia. The negroes and their leaders implicitly, were easily arrayed against the white people and voted solidly for any and all measures to mutilate and keep the white man down. Under the leadership of Underwood, Hunnicutt, Bradsher and of their kind they obtained an overwhelming majority in the reconstruction convention called by Congress to make a constitution for Virginians to live under.

This mongrel organization met but passive opposition throughout the State, for the simple reason that the white people were not organized; the ante-bellum Whigs and Democrats had not gotten together and too many of

Information Bureau.
Inquiries regarding almost any topic, excepting on legal and medical subjects, are answered free. As all in-

Thus it happens that the story told yesterday morning in the "News of Fifty Years Ago" is an account of the birth of the present Democratic party by Mr. McLean's father-in-law.

Negro Enlistments in Navy.
H. G., Richmond.—The navy is enlisting negroes as firemen and mess attendants. Application may be made

at the nearest navy-recruiting station. upon it a half a century ago is but the history of Virginia, familiar to every one.

Patriotic Play.
 Mrs. G. W. G., Hampton.—Your local

Voice of the People

H. E. C. Kidd's Fork.—The county would have to institute condemnation proceedings and secure an order from the court before it could take possession.

N. W., Chatham.—The "Big Ten"

football conference is composed of the following universities: Illinois, Minnesota, Chicago, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, Iowa, Ohio, Purdue and Northwestern. Michigan re-entered the "Big Ten" this season.

the "Big Ten" conference this season after withdrawing from it a number of years ago.

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Allens and the Civil Service.

United States does not admit aliens to civil service positions, except that natives of countries allied with the United States in the present war have lately been considered eligible for some positions.

most take care not to engage in it.
H. T. FAUNTLEROY.
New Kent, Va., December 10, 1917.

Birthstones.—The following is the list of birthstones adopted by the American National Retail Jewelers' Association.

Association in convention August 8, 1913: January, garnet; February, amethyst; March, bloodstone and aquamarine; April, diamond; May, emerald; June, pearl and moonstone; July, ruby;

August, sardonyx and peridot; September, sapphire; October, opal and tourmaline; November, topaz; December, turquoise and lapis-lazuli.

Licenses for Bakers.—J. M. B., Portsmouth.—All persons, firms, corporations and associations who manufacture for sale in any form cake, crackers, biscuits, pastry or other

bakery products and who use as much as ten barrels of flour monthly, by orders of the President must procure a license on or before December 10. Forms of application for license can be

obtained of the United States food administration, at Washington, and there is a penalty for noncompliance.

Government Bonds.

T. C. S., Culpeper.—All United States government bonds are issued in two forms. Coupon bonds which have interest coupons attached, and registered bonds, which are recorded in the own-

er's name and interest sent regularly to him. About 118,000,000 old 4 per cent bonds, issued in 1895 and due in 1925, are outstanding—the only 4 per cent bonds of the United States in ex-

istence before the recent Liberty bond issue. The old 4 per cent bonds are worth more than the Liberty 4 per cent bonds because they are free from all taxation and have an earlier maturity.

Deer Shedding Antlers.
W. S., Big Stone Gap.—A deer sheds his antlers each year, the fully formed ones coming down in the fall.

Motoring at Night in the Country.
Over the city's doorstep,
Where the paving comes to an end,

son there is a marked enlargement of blood to the head, the vessels surrounding the frontal bones become temporarily enlarged. The antlers of a full grown stag are produced in ten weeks. On attaining their full growth

the "burr," consisting of an osseous growth or swelling, is formed, and, through being pressed upon, the blood vessels which supply nutriment to the antlers are cut off. The velvety cover-

ing shrivels up and with the hastening effects of the deer rubbing his antlers against trees and rocks they are soon detached, usually being shed soon after the breeding season, which be-

Origin of Petroleum.
W. C. J., Fork Union.—Petroleum is considered by most geologists to have

been derived by the destructive distillation of either animal or vegetable matter contained in the rocks. The products of this distillation have in some cases accumulated in the strata

In which they were formed, while in others they have escaped upward into the overlying beds, in some instances even reaching the surface. The age of the earth is determined, approximately,

Up we wind through the forest!
Up till the top we gain!
Then a palé surprise in the eastern
^{skies}

of course, by its geological formations, and petroleum occurs in all geological formations, from the lower Silurian or Ordovician up to the Tertiary; it is chiefly of importance in the Silurian.

Devonian and Tertiary rocks. The name "Gotham" is suggestive of simple or foolish people. Irving in his "Salmagundi" applied the name Gothamite to the inhabitants of New York, and to his day it has been a term of reproach.

It has since cringed to them, and the name Gotham to the city. Georgia gets its name, "Cracker State," from the poor whites, who for more than a century have been called "Crackers," chiefly because they subsisted on sugar.

It is to be assumed that President Wilson has postponed asking Congress for a declaration of a state of war with Bulgaria and Turkey, for political reasons which might ultimately work to

our military advantage.